



Childhood Immunizations in Alabama

Routine childhood immunization is one of the crowning achievements in public health over the past century. A 2013 *New England Journal of Medicine* study estimated that childhood vaccination programs have prevented 103.1 million cases of diphtheria, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio and rubella since 1924. A 2005 *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* study estimated that for every dollar spent in the US, vaccination programs saved more than \$5 in direct costs and approximately \$11 in additional costs to society.

Since 2018, however, outbreaks of measles, pertussis, Hib, and other vaccine preventable diseases are returning. Numerous factors—including the cost of acquiring and administering vaccines, an increasingly complex delivery system, as well as a growing number of parents who are forgoing vaccination for their children—put success in jeopardy.

According to preliminary data from IMMPrint, the state’s immunization registry, vaccination rates for all early childhood immunizations are down by as much as 10 percent among 19-47 months since 2018. This is concerning due to potential reintroduction of dangerous or even deadly diseases that can spread in child care settings and schools. On the other end of the childhood age spectrum, rates of meningococcal immunizations among youth 14-18 years of age are down by as much as 28 percent.

Talking points

- The Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has long supported preventive care, including immunizations, in the medical home setting as a major component of pediatric health care and disease prevention and believes legislative barriers should not restrict access to immunizations or other forms of preventive care for children.
- Pediatricians have long prescribed and administered childhood immunizations as standard of care per national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations for diphtheria, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio, rubella, Meningococcal disease, Tetanus, and HPV.
- Pediatricians overwhelmingly agree that vaccines are safe. They are rigorously tested prior to their approval and are thoroughly monitored in the millions of children who safely receive them each year.
- The established "recommended child and adolescent immunization schedule" is at the heart of the health and well-being of all children. No law should be considered or passed that would take steps back from the long-established success of the historic immunization schedule.

AAP Position

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has long supported preventive care, including immunizations, in the medical home setting as a major component of pediatric health care and disease prevention and believes economic barriers should not restrict access to immunizations or other forms of preventive care for children. The AAP works to educate the public and key decision makers about the importance of routine child immunization and actively counters misinformation about vaccine safety and efficacy.

Facts from the AAP

- 70.4% of children between the ages of 19 and 35 months were immunized according to ACIP/AAP/AAFP/ACOG recommendations in 2017.
- 15,808 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) were reported in the US in 2017. A multistate outbreak of measles linked to an amusement park in California led to 188 cases in 24 states from January 1 to August 21, 2015. Most measles patients were unvaccinated against the disease.
- 2% of children entering kindergarten across the country in the 2017-2018 school year had nonmedical exemptions from immunization requirements. Of states and localities reporting, Oregon has the highest rate at 7.5%, and California, the lowest at 0.1%.
- More than 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths among children born between 1994 and 2013 have been prevented by vaccines.